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Chair: Mr. Zelioli (Vice-Chair) ..... (Italy)

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in the absence of Mr. Haniff (Malaysia), Mr. Zelioli (Italy), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 65: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/66/227, 228, 230, 256 and 257)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*) (A/66/258)

1. **Ms. Bruell-Melchior** (Monaco) said that both in domestic policy and in international cooperation, her country was guided by a concern for the rights of children. Monaco supported the Secretary-General's call for equity-focused strategies to assist the world's most vulnerable children, including girls and children with disabilities. In addition to funding education projects for parents and caregivers of visually impaired children, her Government was collaborating with local partners to adapt the physical environment in order to make it easier for disabled persons, including children, to function outside their homes. Princess Charlene of Monaco was a Global Ambassador for the Special Olympics.

2. Monaco supported microfinance programmes for foster families and young parents, as well as programmes to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. Monegasque international cooperation provided critical medical services for children in other countries, and through a philanthropic partnership organized by the Prince, since 2008 almost 140 children had undergone surgery in Monaco for cardiac or orthopaedic conditions that could not be treated in their home countries.

3. Monaco wished to pay tribute to the comprehensive, child-centred approach of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and to reiterate its determination to assist in implementing protective systems at the national and international levels. It supported the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children on behalf of children in armed conflict and endorsed the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups.

4. The Security Council's adoption in July of resolution 1998 (2011), which strongly condemned attacks against schools or hospitals, was encouraging. In that connection, she drew attention to the UNESCO *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011*, which called for documenting attacks on schools and urged the Security Council to take appropriate measures, including sanctions, to combat the culture of impunity. In November 2011, Monaco would be hosting the Conference on the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2012-2015, in which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children would participate.

5. **Mr. Bamba** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that in addition to having ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Protocols, his country was a party to the Minimum Age Convention and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of the International Labour Organization (ILO) as well as to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. It was also bound by a multilateral regional cooperation agreement on combating the trafficking of children. The recruitment of child soldiers during the recent conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire had stopped in the face of a groundswell of opposition from every sector of society.

6. Côte d'Ivoire's laws and regulations prohibited female genital mutilation, humiliating or corporal punishment of children at school, the worst forms of child labour and the prostitution, trafficking or military recruitment of children. To combat child labour on cocoa plantations, it was implementing the Harkin-Engel Protocol. However, child labour could not be eliminated without eliminating the root cause: poverty. With that in mind, in September 2011 the Government had launched a programme aimed at community mobilization against child labour, at the construction of community dispensaries and education centres, and at the creation of income-generating activities.

7. **Ms. Sulimani** (Sierra Leone) said that the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs was undergoing functional review to make it more effective in coordinating and monitoring child protection issues. Sierra Leone was amending its Adoption Act and had ratified ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 in June 2011. Her country had instituted awareness-raising programmes to encourage teenage mothers to stay in school. Its free health care service, launched in April 2010, had already succeeded

in lowering maternal and infant mortality rates, and television campaigns were being used to promote birth registration.

8. Sierra Leone was taking steps to increase awareness of the importance of hygiene, nutrition, immunization and mosquito nets for combating diarrhoea, pneumonia and malaria, the three deadliest diseases among young children. It had also set up reception centres for child trafficking victims and had completed development of the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence 2011. Her Government had made progress on implementing the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. It provided support to former child combatants and had developed plans for paying reparation to war victims. It had also endorsed the Paris Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups.

9. To involve children in asserting their rights, Sierra Leone had established a children's advocacy organization, the Children's Forum Network, and had produced a booklet, a children's radio project and a children's newspaper in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Teachers were being trained on children's rights issues, and the Government was negotiating with UNICEF to include those issues in the curriculum.

10. **Mr. Schroeer** (Germany) called on Member States to support two child-related draft resolutions before the General Assembly. The first, of which Germany was a leading sponsor, would formally adopt the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, which would finally give the Committee on the Rights of the Child a communications procedure in line with the other human rights treaty bodies. The second, tabled by the European Union and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/197, concerned the promotion and protection of the rights of children with disabilities.

11. As chair of the Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict, Germany collaborated with UNICEF and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to strengthen the instruments available to the Security Council to protect children from the effects of conflict. Its efforts had recently led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 1998 (2011), under which recurrent attacks or threats of attack on schools or hospitals were to be included among the violations for which parties to armed conflict were listed in the annexes to the Secretary-General's periodic report on children and armed conflict. Germany's support of all mandate holders for children's rights included financial support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children.

12. At home, Germany had adopted two national action plans: the first, to implement the objectives agreed at the special session of the General Assembly on children, and the second, to protect children and young people from sexual violence and exploitation.

13. **Mr. Mnisi** (Swaziland) said that the Swazi Constitution recognized the family as the fundamental unit of society and acknowledged the right of children to be brought up by their parents or legal guardians. His country had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and was making efforts to accede to the two Optional Protocols. In 2009, it had instituted a national children's policy in order to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of all children. To protect children in conflict with the law, it had established a child-friendly children's court but was prevented from creating a network of such courts by a lack of resources.

14. HIV/AIDS had decimated the traditional extended family support structure for children, resulting in a growing number of child-headed households. To help those children, the Government had set up Neighbourhood Care Points, where children could come each day for a meal, basic health care, recreational activities and psychological support. While his country condemned violence against children in any form, it did allow corporal punishment at school, but only with the authorization of the Director of Education and in accordance with the Education Rules, which were designed to protect pupils from physical abuse in the name of discipline.

15. Swaziland saw human trafficking as a contemporary form of slavery and was deeply concerned by its proliferation. Alarmingly, it had become possible to buy not just pornography but also women and children on line for purposes of sexual exploitation. Accordingly, he urged increased

cooperation, including technology transfers, among States to put an end to such criminal activity.

16. **Ms. Daniel** (Botswana) said that her country was a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 and was actively considering ratification of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. With respect to domestic norms, it was in the process of reviewing the Adoption Act of 1952 and its implementing regulations in the light of the Hague conventions on children and new developments in the placement of children in alternative care.

17. Children with disabilities were prone to multiple forms of discrimination. Children in areas of armed conflict were more likely to be subjected to forced labour, sale and trafficking, recruitment into armed groups, early marriage and sexual exploitation. Botswana supported all efforts to combat those problems and safeguard the rights of all children.

18. Through various sectors, Botswana had established programmes, policies and laws to protect children against violence. It had strategies for disseminating information on child abuse to stakeholders, empowering children to identify and report abuse and sensitizing families and communities to child abuse issues. In addition, it had partnered with stakeholders, including civil society organizations, to address issues relating to abuse prevention and protection, assistance for victims and perpetrator intervention.

19. Botswana had improved the accessibility and quality of education by building more primary and junior secondary schools and had instituted policies on early childhood development and readmitting school dropouts. By implementing services for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and scaling up programmes to provide full immunization of children by age one, it had been able to reduce maternal and under-five mortality significantly. However, despite those gains, strengthening cooperation with the United Nations system and development partners remained critical.

20. **Mr. Gaspar Martins** (Angola) said that his country's new Constitution had improved the legal framework for protecting and promoting the rights of its children. Angola was working with UNICEF to implement the recommendations of the 2006 report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children (A/61/299). The mainstay of those efforts was a network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), churches and government institutions, supported by Angola's National Council for Children.

21. He appealed to the specialized international institutions for assistance in remedying a major shortcoming: the lack of a database for collecting systematic data on cases of violence against children. Angola remained committed to increasing the effectiveness of its national legislation, policies and child protection systems, increasing the availability of data on violence against children, accelerating access to birth registration and reintegrating children involved in armed conflict.

22. **Ms. Gunnarsdóttir** (Iceland) said that the Convention on the Rights of the Child was the cornerstone of its international and national efforts to protect and promote the rights of children. She wished to highlight two issues. First, with wider access to new technologies, female foetuses were increasingly being aborted in the belief that daughters were worth less than sons. The staggering potential consequences of a world in which men outnumbered women included increased crime, bride trafficking and sexual violence. She called on Governments, international organizations, NGOs and religious leaders to work to reverse that trend.

23. Secondly, in conditions of poverty, adolescent girls often found themselves prematurely forced into the role of wife, mother or caretaker. It was crucial to ensure that girls were educated, healthy and skilled so that they could support the economic development of their societies and contribute to advancing social justice and eradicating poverty.

24. Iceland welcomed the increased emphasis of UNICEF on reaching young people, particularly adolescent girls, as demonstrated in its *State of the World's Children 2011*. Having served on the Executive Board of UNICEF, Iceland was aware of the colossal tasks before it and had identified UNICEF as one of four key multilateral partners in the Strategy for Iceland's Development Cooperation 2011-2014.

25. **Mr. Charles** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that his country had undertaken a number of measures to meet its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international instruments. The new Government had established a Ministry of

Gender, Youth and Child Development in 2011. His country's national plan of action for children focused on quality education, health care, prevention of HIV/AIDS and protection from abuse, exploitation and violence. Trinidad and Tobago had enacted new laws to protect children from discrimination and violence: the Miscellaneous Provisions (Minimum Age for Admission to Employment) Act of 2007 and the Trafficking in Persons Act of 2011. An older law, the Domestic Violence Act of 1999, allowed children to apply for a protection order.

26. Trinidad and Tobago had attained Millennium Development Goals 2 (universal primary education) and 3 (gender equality) in primary and secondary education. Primary, secondary and tertiary education were free, and financial grants were available to parents to defray the costs associated with school attendance. It had taken various measures to assist children with disabilities, implement inclusive education and provide for early diagnosis and intervention, including vision and hearing screening. Children received free school meals and health care, and members of the Cabinet donated 5 per cent of their salaries to a special fund for children needing specialized medical treatment abroad.

27. **Ms. Maduhu** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that her country had ratified the Convention, its Optional Protocols and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. It was committed to ensuring their implementation, thereby achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children. Because the problems afflicting children were closely tied to socio-economic factors, her country's poverty reduction strategy incorporated child-related key outcomes.

28. To date, the United Republic of Tanzania had achieved nearly 100 per cent enrolment at the primary school level. Vaccination, improved nutrition, distribution of insecticide-treated nets and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of diseases had significantly reduced neonatal, under-five and maternal mortality rates. Through the Junior Council, the Government continued to ensure that children were consulted on and participated in issues of their concern.

29. While the findings of the 2009 UNICEF Tanzania Violence against Children Study were troubling, they had provided an opportunity for breaking the silence on that subject and would be useful to policymakers and practitioners alike. The Government had already taken action by translating the 2009 National Child Act into Kiswahili and disseminating it to communities, establishing a child helpline and setting up a high-level task force on street children.

30. **Mr. Beleffi** (San Marino) said that his country had recently ratified the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. San Marino had been integrating all but the most severely disabled children into the classroom for more than 40 years, and it had been among the first States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He called for strategies and policies targeting children with disabilities, which would be necessary to achieve Millennium Development Goal 2, universal primary education. His country pledged its support for all initiatives aimed at promoting the rights of the child.

31. **Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan), speaking as a youth delegate, called on all leaders — heads of State and international bodies, business leaders, youth leaders and civil society leaders — to renew their commitment to protecting children against all forms of violence, abuse and neglect. In particular, it was necessary to enact explicit legal prohibitions for every form in every context. Emerging technologies such as the Internet posed new threats to children and created new responsibilities: for States, the responsibility to enact new laws; for civil society, the responsibility to educate the public; for the companies marketing new technologies, the responsibility to incorporate abuse-prevention mechanisms; for parents and all those who touched the lives of children, the responsibility to be able to recognize early signs of abuse and for, children, the responsibility to protect other children, especially younger children.

32. The world's young people had an essential role to play in attaining the Millennium Development Goals and should be treated as equals, with equity and tolerance. Education was pivotal, because it could break poverty, lessen violence and empower women. Moreover, in an information society, literacy had become a basic need.

33. Because of Azerbaijan's youthful population, it policies and programmes considered the interests of the young. However, it was difficult to help Azerbaijan's many child refugees and internally displaced children. During twenty years of conflict, it had not been possible to educate all of the children living in camps,

who had moreover suffered stress and psychological trauma. He hoped that the conflict could be resolved soon, so that those children's children could enjoy a better future.

34. **Mr. Pham** Binh Anh (Viet Nam) said that he shared the view that the promotion and protection of children's rights should be integral not only to the legal systems, policies and strategies of Member States, but also to the plans and programmes of all of the United Nations development agencies. Furthermore, to work more effectively and avoid duplication, United Nations bodies, treaty bodies and specialized agencies involved in children's issues should make further efforts to improve coordination.

35. Viet Nam had been among the first countries to ratify the Convention and its Protocols. Its laws and programmes of action were a testament to its commitment to protecting and promoting children. More than 90 per cent of children under six received free health care, and vaccination programmes had been implemented nationwide. Micronutrient supplement programmes had helped to reduce malnutrition and infant mortality.

36. Viet Nam had closed the gender gap in schooling, had achieved universal primary education and was working toward universal secondary education. Its National Action Plan on Children 2011-2015 aimed, inter alia, to reduce the proportion of children with special needs to 5.5 per cent and to provide assistance and care for 80 per cent of them.

37. **Ms. Bonkoungou/Kandolo** (Burkina Faso) said that, as a least developed country with a very young population, her country took a keen interest in the protection and promotion of children's rights. Unfortunately, its economic and social policies in that area were hindered by a lack of financial resources. The least well-known and most commonly violated children's rights in her country were the rights to physical integrity, special protection and education. To increase awareness of children's rights in general, Burkina Faso had included them in the curriculum of the relevant professional training schools, organized educational conferences on children's right for targeted audiences and distributed the children's rights guide, translated into its seven main languages, in all regions.

38. To improve respect for children's physical integrity, her country had enacted laws against violence against children and exploitation, trafficking in persons and all corporal punishment in schools. In addition to operating a child violence helpline, it was implementing a plan of action to combat female genital mutilation and had undertaken projects to end forced marriage. To afford special protection for children, Burkina Faso had carried out birth registration campaigns, resulting in a 92 per cent registration rate in 2010. It had also established quarters for minors in its corrections facilities and had barred children from certain dangerous occupations.

39. A programme to provide education for street children had been strengthened, and efforts were being made to assist orphans and vulnerable children. With respect to the right to education, Burkina Faso had increased enrolment by more than one quarter at both the primary and secondary levels and had set up education centres for out-of-school children. It was carrying out projects to promote girls' enrolment in provinces where particularly few girls were enrolled and had adopted norms for special education.

40. **Mr. Šćepanović** (Montenegro) said that his Government was working with UNICEF to deinstitutionalize the child protection system. Together, they had developed a draft master plan that was compatible with Montenegro's needs and goals and consistent with the international instruments. As part of the process of European integration, it had also strengthened the capacity of the Council for the Rights of the Child and created a network of day care centres for children with disabilities.

41. Montenegro would continue to work with UNICEF to achieve equality, inclusion and protection for vulnerable children, including Roma children and children with disabilities. With the Government's cooperation, UNICEF had launched an awareness campaign to promote a programme of inclusive education for children with disabilities. In addition, the deinstitutionalization of the child protection system would allow disabled children to live in a normal, caring environment.

42. **Mr. Kibret** (Ethiopia) supported the Secretary-General's view that an equity-focused approach might be the best way to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. As a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Ethiopia had taken steps to harmonize its legal framework with those

instruments. Its Constitution guaranteed the rights of the child, and its laws protected children from early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, rape, abduction and trafficking in children.

43. Through a series of extensive immunization campaigns against six deadly diseases, Ethiopia had succeeded in reducing infant and under-five mortality. To increase girls' enrolment and decrease the drop-out rate, it had built low-cost schools and alternative basic-education centres and had instituted programmes to raise parent awareness of the need to send all of their children to school. As a result, girls' primary school enrolment had risen from 53 per cent to 93 per cent in seven years, and there had been significant progress in gender parity at both the primary and secondary levels.

44. **Mr. Faizal** (Maldives) said that, as a member of the Human Rights Council, his country had been instrumental in its adoption of the third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure. The Maldives was committed to following through on the recommendations of the universal periodic review outcome report, adopted in March 2011. It was grateful to UNICEF for its assistance in drafting new legislation to fill the gaps identified during a review of the legal framework for the protection of children.

45. The Maldives had increased the penalties for sexual violence against children, had set up a children's helpline and had undertaken a comprehensive public awareness programme to help remove the stigma associated with victims of sexual abuse. To improve child-protection services, centres had been opened on 20 outlying atolls, and the Government was striving to strengthen cooperation and collaboration with civil society. The Maldives had actively participated in the South Asian Initiative To End Violence against Children. Having achieved universal access to primary education, his country was working to improve access at the secondary and tertiary levels. The Government had made fighting drug addiction among young people one of its five key pledges.

46. **Mr. Nepal** (Nepal) said that, although a least developed country just emerging from conflict, Nepal had embarked on a path to promote and protect the rights of children, which were enshrined in its interim Constitution. Its Children's Act incorporated almost all of the rights of the child set forth in the Convention. Other laws incorporated the provisions of the two Optional Protocols and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention. His country was a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, as well as to the Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia and the Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

47. Nepal's National Plan of Action for Children covered children's health and their protection against abuse, exploitation and violence, combated HIV/AIDS, and aimed to ensure that all children had access to free and compulsory primary education. Its criminal justice system prescribed child-friendly procedures and was geared toward the rehabilitation of child offenders. Nepal was building the capacities of children's welfare homes and had instituted programmes to identify and manage street children and rehabilitate and protect children at risk. It had also made significant progress in reducing under-five mortality. Lastly, it had adopted a zero tolerance policy on child recruitment into armed conflict. Almost 3,000 minors had been released from various cantonments and reintegrated into society.

48. **Ms. Ivanović** (Serbia) expressed the hope that the General Assembly would adopt the third Optional Protocol by consensus during the ongoing session. Serbia was fulfilling its commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Protocols and had recently endorsed the Paris Commitments and Principles. For ten years, Serbia's domestic strategies had focused on harmonizing its laws and regulations with the *acquis* of the European Union. It had developed a corpus of law to protect and promote children's rights, as well as numerous strategies in a wide range of fields that contributed directly or indirectly to the exercise of those rights. To address violence against children in a comprehensive way, it had adopted a national strategy and national action plan and was participating in a regional project to protect children from violence, launched by the European Union and UNICEF.

49. Although encouraging, the preliminary results of a multiple indicator survey conducted by the Serbian statistical office showed disparities for various groups of vulnerable children. Accordingly, the five-year country programme action plan signed between Serbia and UNICEF in December 2010 would focus primarily

on the social inclusion of vulnerable children and families.

50. **Mr. Giorgio** (Eritrea) said that he welcomed the steady increase in the number of ratifications of the conventions and protocols on children. Eritrea itself had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols and was up to date in its reporting obligation to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It had also ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and several ILO conventions.

51. Since poverty disproportionately affected children, Eritrea's long-standing policy had been to achieve rapid economic growth and human development, including by ensuring food security. The introduction of salt iodization, food fortification and therapeutic feeding centres had led to a decline in the number of underweight children, which was expected to continue. It had reduced under-five mortality to a better-than-average 55 deaths per 1,000 live births; mortality due to malaria by more than 82 per cent; and HIV/AIDS prevalence, to near zero.

52. Eritrea had moved closer to its goal of universal elementary education, with an 87.3 per cent increase in enrolment between 1995 and 2010. Children from all nine ethnic groups were instructed in their mother tongues in primary school. There had also been determined efforts to redress the gender and regional imbalance in the education system. However, only 56.2 per cent of school-age children were currently enrolled, and the Government was working with UNICEF to increase attendance in nomadic communities.

53. Eritrea had banned female genital mutilation and had provisions in its legal system to protect vulnerable children. A plan of action to combat the commercial exploitation of children took a preventive approach. Orphans and other vulnerable children were also reintegrated with their extended families. Eritrea had endorsed the Paris Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment and had joined with other States to advance that agenda.

54. **Mr. Alsubaiei** (Bahrain) said that the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Bahrain was a longstanding party, had now gained international consensus. In 1999, the country had established a National Committee for the Child comprising representatives of the public and private sectors. The Committee worked towards the advancement of children of all ages, provided legal protection, proposed solutions to fundamental issues and prepared national reports on the implementation of the Convention. In cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Committee was formulating a national strategy in order to coordinate efforts to protect the rights of the child.

55. Bahrain was also a party numerous other instruments, including ILO Con· ntion No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Imm diate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, and had formed committees within each ministry in order to examine the implications of those instruments. In his country, every child received vaccinations at the age of two months, and health workers visited homes to ensure that the vaccinations had been administered. Centres had been opened in order to ensure children's physical, intellectual and educational well-being and to combat abuse and neglect.

56. **Mr. Ahmed** (Bangladesh) said that his country was committed to promoting the best interests of children. Since ratifying the Convention in 1992, it had implemented a long series of national action plans for children, and its Suppression of Violence against Women and Children Act dated back to 2000. At the regional level, Bangladesh was actively pursuing children's rights issues and had endorsed the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation conventions on child welfare and combating child prostitution.

57. There had been many recent initiatives on behalf of children. Bangladesh's ongoing, five-year Empowerment and Protection of Children project focused on providing life-based skills training for teenage girls through adolescent clubs. The recently formed National Committee on Women and Children Development had agreed to take steps to strengthen inter-ministerial cooperation on the rehabilitation of street children, protect child labourers, formulate a code of conduct for employers of child domestics and prevent the use of children for commercial purposes. A nationwide programme had been launched to raise awareness about sexual harassment.

58. Private-public-NGO cooperation had resulted in programmes for abandoned children, street children and children with disabilities, and a special hospital had been established to meet the medical needs of

autistic children. In closing, he expressed encouragement that, in recognition of the hardships faced by children in areas of armed conflict, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations had adopted a child protection policy directive on mainstreaming the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict and had assigned a child protection adviser to each peacekeeping mission.

59. **Ms. Hassan** (Djibouti) said that her country had ratified all of the international children's rights instruments, including most recently the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was in compliance with its reporting obligations under the Convention and had withdrawn its reservation. To combat female genital mutilation, Djibouti had enacted a new law giving associations active in that field the right to bring civil action on behalf of victims.

60. The National Plan of Action for Children focused on education, with special emphasis on early childhood. A two-region pilot pre-school programme set up under the plan had recently been expanded to include four more pre-schools for children in rural or disadvantaged urban areas. As part of its National Plan of Action for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children, a vocational training programme had been established for them, and 700 children had received clothing, food, school kits, access to tutoring and transport money. In addition, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women would be conducting studies and implementing strategies to care for them in a protective environment.

61. In closing, she drew attention to Djibouti's unprecedented drought, which made the support of its bilateral and multilateral partners all the more crucial for its ongoing efforts to assist its most vulnerable groups, including, first and foremost, children.

62. **Mr. Cabactulan** (Philippines), expressing his appreciation for the Secretary-General's attention to the rights of children with disabilities in his report on the status of the Convention (A/66/230), concurred with his position on the importance of international cooperation for improving their living conditions in developing countries. The rights of children were enshrined in the Philippine Constitution and protected and promoted by an arsenal of statutes in line with the Convention, its Protocols and other international instruments, including the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Act of 2003 and the Newborn Screening Act of 2004.

63. The Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 raised the age of criminal responsibility from 9 to 15 and prohibited the detention of juveniles in jails. Earlier, the Special Protection of Children against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act of 1992 had established penalties for sex-related crimes involving children, as well as for the use of children in armed conflict, and had provided for their protection and evacuation in such circumstances.

64. The Philippines attached the utmost importance to the issue of the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. During her visit in April 2011, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict had expressed satisfaction at progress in that area, including programmes to rehabilitate and reintegrate children used in armed conflict and the restructuring of governmental oversight mechanisms. The Philippines would continue to cooperate with the United Nations and other stakeholders to promote and protect the rights of children, especially in the context of armed combat.

65. **Ms. Zografska-Krsteska** (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) stressed that the problems confronting children required global, national, regional and local action. At the national level, in 2007, her country had created the National Commission for the Rights of the Child to oversee implementation of the Convention. It was also responsible for preparing and monitoring national action plans on children's rights, on which it reported annually to the Government. The Commission had been instrumental in focusing attention on children's needs and mobilizing decision-makers. Its diverse membership included representatives of ministries, the Ombudsman's Office, the national UNICEF office and NGOs. NGO members were selected competitively and had recently been granted the same right of decision as other Commission members.

66. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was implementing the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child for compliance with the Convention and its two Optional Protocols. It supported adoption of the third optional protocol on a communications procedure. In cooperation with its partners, including UNICEF, her country was taking

steps to curb violence in schools and instil a culture of non-violence among pupils, as well as to address disparities between urban and rural children; promote social equity and inclusion, particularly for Roma children, and improve the quality of education.

67. **Mr. Andrade** (Brazil) said that, as one of the first countries to enact a specific set of laws on the rights of the child, the Statute of the Child and the Adolescent, Brazil had been working for twenty years to shrink poverty, improve access to primary education, reduce child mortality and develop a legal and policy framework on sexual exploitation and juvenile justice. Despite significant achievements, many challenges remained, particularly with respect to poverty.

68. The Government intended to expand social policies in order to beat back the extreme poverty afflicting millions of Brazilian children and adolescents. It also attached priority to ensuring that pregnant women and babies received medical care from the moment pregnancy was confirmed through the first two years of the baby's life. Brazil was a strong supporter of universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. As a co-sponsor of Human Rights Council resolution 17/18 concerning the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure, it looked forward to its adoption by the General Assembly during the course of the session.

69. Brazil welcomed the decision to focus the 2011 omnibus resolution on children with disabilities, who constituted one of society's most disadvantaged groups. Poverty and disability went hand in hand. At the international level, urgent action was needed to address the plight of the more than 400 million impoverished people with disabilities in developing countries. At the national level, Brazil had for some years been implementing integrated policies to guarantee children with disabilities access to inclusive education and social and economic integration. His delegation would be submitting a draft resolution entitled "World Down Syndrome Day", which he hoped the Committee would approve by consensus.

70. **Mr. Kohona** (Sri Lanka) said that his country's Constitution specifically made allowance for special provisions in favour of women, children and disabled persons. The Penal Code (Amendment) Act of 2006 had strengthened legal provisions on the sale of children and child prostitution, widened the definition of human trafficking to conform with international standards, criminalized the soliciting of children for sexual purposes and their recruitment into armed conflict, and included mental trauma in the definition of compensable injury. It had also addressed cybercrime against children. Under that new provisions, the courts had recently issued a landmark decision shutting down a service provider used to transmit child pornography. Sri Lanka had actively participated in the South Asian Initiative To End Violence against Children and under it, in conjunction with NGO partners, was developing an action plan on issues such as corporal punishment, sexual abuse and exploitation, child trafficking, child labour and early marriage.

71. Violence against children, especially disabled and migrant children, was tragic. Sri Lanka particularly condemned the practice of child recruitment for armed combat. In cooperation with UNICEF, it had implemented a Paris Principles-based rehabilitation and reintegration process for former child soldiers and in 2010, as part of that process, had released almost 600 rehabilitated children from institutions for continued rehabilitation in the community, where they remained under the purview of the Department of Social Services. It had also succeeded in tracing and reuniting more than 600 children with their families.

72. Among its other duties, the National Child Protection Authority was implementing a programme to provide livelihood support to foster families of conflict-affected children, alongside a number of similar programmes run in collaboration with NGOs and United Nations partner agencies. More than 900 of the 1,020 schools abandoned in the North during the civil war had been rehabilitated and were functioning normally. Children in conflict with the law also required special care and protection. The Government took the need to prevent institutionalization seriously and was cooperating with civil society partners on de-institutionalization programmes.

73. **Mr. Mohammad Pour Ferami** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that in a changing world it was necessary, first and foremost, to increase awareness among children and adolescents of the role of the family and the importance of moral and ethical values. As the basic unit of society, the family held primary responsibility for the protection and upbringing of children, and a happy parent-child relationship was imperative for a child to realize his or her innate

potential. That belief formed the cornerstone of the Islamic Republic's national plans and strategies for children, as well as its position on international children's issues.

74. In the view of his delegation, the comprehensive report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (A/66/228), with its coverage of issues such as existing and expanding markets in developed countries, could provide a basis for addressing the problems in question. He urged the international community to give paramount attention to the plight of children living in difficult situations of armed conflict, foreign occupation and dire humanitarian crisis, including, in particular, the children in Somalia and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

75. In recent years, the Islamic Republic of Iran had achieved a consistently downward trend in child mortality and a sharp increase in primary school enrolment. New measures on behalf of children included a comprehensive bill addressing all aspects of the protection, promotion, development and survival of children; increased budget allocations to child-related areas at the national and local levels; and a policy document on the security of women and children. Lastly, a databank on the rights of children and adolescents had been set up as an essential component of a rights-based child protection system.

76. **Ms. Borges** (Timor-Leste) said that, with half of its population under 19 years of age, Timor-Leste was keenly aware of the importance of protecting and encouraging young people. Every year since 2004, it had celebrated Universal Children's Day, with special festivities on the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in 2009. It had ratified not only the Convention and its Optional Protocols but also the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention and the Trafficking Protocol to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It had also worked to further children's rights in other forums, such as the East Asia and the Pacific Ministerial Consultation on Children and the Regional Conference on Violence against Children.

77. In coordination with UNICEF, Timor-Leste had developed a draft Children's Code, released in March, that would establish and safeguard the rights of children in conflict with the law. Through improved health services, information campaigns and immunization strategies, it had reduced under-five mortality from 115 deaths per 1,000 births in 2001 to 64 deaths per 1,000 births in 2010. It had tripled its education budget since 2006 despite scarce resources and, with the assistance of Cuba, had launched a national project to eradicate illiteracy by 2015. The Education Base Law of 2008 implemented the universal right to education guaranteed in the Constitution by opening schools from the primary to the tertiary level to anyone between the ages of 6 and 37. Enrolment rates had increased by almost a quarter between 2004 and 2009 and even more steeply since.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

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Chair: Mr. Haniff Hussein ..... (Malaysia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 65: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/66/227, A/66/228, A/66/230, A/66/256 and A/66/257)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*) (A/66/258)

1. **Mr. Zeidan** (Observer for Palestine) said that, due to the continuing Israeli occupation, there had been little progress towards achieving children's rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Palestinian children had been killed, and hundreds had been illegally imprisoned and detained. Homes were raided at night, and children were seized and photographed in so-called mapping exercises.

2. Demolitions and evictions left Palestinian children homeless, and the destruction of roads leading to schools had an impact on children's access to school and on their safety. A primary school for the Bedouin community near Jerusalem and a kindergarten in the northern part of the West Bank had received demolition orders. In one village, 97 per cent of the structures had received demolition orders, including homes, the mosque and the village's sole medical centre.

3. The number of lethal and violent attacks by settlers against Palestinians, including children, had increased. Recently, an Israeli settler had intentionally struck and run over an eight-year-old boy, with utter impunity.

4. Children living in the Gaza Strip endured the harsh consequences of Israel's illegal blockade. Freedom of movement was violated, and access to essential supplies was denied. Palestinian children were awakened by the sound of Israeli warplanes firing indiscriminately on their villages and towns. Israel was deliberately delaying reconstruction of schools destroyed in 2008 and 2009. The international community should hold Israeli forces accountable for crimes committed against Palestinian children.

5. **Mr. Buckley** (Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta) said that, while child mortality was at an all-time low, it must be reduced nearly sixfold in order to reach Millennium Development Goals targets. Four out of five early childhood deaths were attributable to preventable diseases and malnutrition. The Order of Malta had successful programmes to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Latin America, Asia, Africa and elsewhere. In parts of Mexico, the Order's efforts to save children from HIV/AIDS had prevented transmission of the virus to more than 600 children. The Order also had malaria and tuberculosis prevention and treatment programmes. The Order had 32 mother-child health centres in Myanmar that provided more than 9,000 malnourished children with meals each day and taught mothers about nutrition. It had similar projects in many other countries and was providing staple foods to people at risk of famine in northern Kenya.

6. At its Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, the Order provided intensive care for premature infants and had delivered over 50,000 babies since 1989, for families of all religions. The Order had programmes in many countries to ensure access to safe water close to home, in order to reduce girls' workloads.

7. **Mr. Young** (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that armed conflict and other violence were a leading cause of disability in children. Some 1 million children had been disabled as a result of the conflict in Afghanistan, largely owing to disregard for international humanitarian law, including the requirement to distinguish between civilians and combatants. Children in some 80 countries were at constant risk due to landmines, cluster bombs, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices, which continued to affect people long after war ended.

8. Indirect effects of armed conflict, such as the collapse of health-care systems or difficult access to health care, caused children's health to suffer. As a result, simple diseases were left untreated and led to permanent disabilities. In areas affected by armed conflict, many children were born with disabilities because women had limited access to proper care and decent conditions during pregnancy and delivery. Attacks on health facilities, personnel and vehicles were committed with utter disregard for international humanitarian law. Violence that prevented access to health care, one of the most serious humanitarian issues of the day, was often overlooked. The International Committee of the Red Cross endeavoured to persuade all parties to conflicts to respect international humanitarian law. That included respect for medical services.

9. The Committee supported the delivery of emergency care for persons wounded in conflict and in many areas where there were landmines and weapons. It also provided access to physical rehabilitation. In 2010, there had been more than 200,000 beneficiaries of such programmes, including some 56,000 children.

10. Disabled children were particularly vulnerable in armed conflict. For children with disabilities, attending school in situations of conflict was often impossible, reducing the chances of their playing a full role in their societies.

11. **Ms. Klein Solomon** (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that her Organization worked to reduce trafficking in children and provided victim assistance. The rights of unaccompanied migrant children must be protected regardless of their legal status in the country of destination, and such protection must be child-specific. In situations of armed conflict, children sometimes found themselves unaccompanied outside their country of origin. Special consideration should be given to the safe return of children who had fled conflicts. Effective cross-border coordination was crucial.

12. **Mr. Motter** (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) said that women and children must be made aware of the right of children to affordable, quality health care, enshrined in various international instruments. Legal barriers to its achievement must be removed, and resources for its realization must be allocated.

13. The Inter-Parliamentary Union provided training for members of parliaments and supported national initiatives to provide universal access to health services by all women and children. There was an increasing number of parliamentary initiatives to enforce the right to health care. The Bern Initiative for Global Parliamentary Action on Maternal and Child Health, established in 2010 by women speakers of parliament, contained a strong global commitment to achieving Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5. The Initiative included a commitment to support measures for maternal and newborn health. The Inter-Parliamentary Union had launched a parliamentary dialogue that would culminate in a resolution recommending parliamentary action in support of women's and children's health, including adequate funding, changes to national health policies and oversight for improved service delivery.

14. **Mr. Cassidy** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that, while the number of child labourers had declined from 222 million in 2004 to 215 million in 2008, that in fact represented a slowing in the global pace of reduction. The Hague Global Child Labour Conference, held in 2010, had adopted a road map to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2016. ILO Conventions No. 138 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and Work and No. 182 concerning the Worst Forms of Child Labour should be universally ratified, and the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work should be realized in full. A special emphasis on Africa that would mainstream child labour interventions in programmes and budgets was called for. Governments had primary responsibility for eliminating child labour.

15. In Africa, the root causes of child labour had been compounded by armed conflict and natural disaster, leading to displacement, destruction of livelihoods and schools and the use of child soldiers. Sustainable livelihood opportunities were key to protecting children from exploitation, crime, violence and re-recruitment.

16. Efforts to combat child trafficking involved increasing the knowledge base on trafficking in the context of warfare and improved monitoring and law enforcement. National surveys and data collection initiatives were under way in Sierra Leone and other countries affected by conflict. Such work supported ongoing ILO efforts to advance policy planning and intervention design against child labour in post-conflict countries. The results of its national survey in Liberia would be published before the end of 2011.

17. To mark the World Day against Child Labour in 2011, ILO had issued a report entitled *Children in hazardous work: What we know, what we need to do.*

Agenda item 66: Indigenous issues (A/66/288)

(a) Indigenous issues

(b) Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

18. **Ms. Bas** (Director of the Social Policy and Development Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) applauded the recent decisions of the Governments of Canada and the United States to support the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The 2009 decisions by the Governments of

Australia and New Zealand to support the Declaration were also significant. The Declaration had obtained universal support.

19. Many indigenous peoples had been displaced and uprooted. Their natural resources were under threat, many of their languages were dying out and often their very survival was in question. The majority of the world's indigenous people lived in deplorable conditions and had shorter lifespans and higher rates of infant and maternal mortality than did other people. The midterm assessment of the progress made in the achievement of the goal and objectives of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (A/65/166) which the Secretary-General had submitted to the General Assembly in 2010 demonstrated alarming implementation gaps.

20. Through the Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues, Samburu women elders had shared traditional forest management knowledge with indigenous youth in Kenya; indigenous communities in Cambodia had strengthened their marketing and financial management skills; and indigenous peoples in Nicaragua had improved access to justice.

21. The General Assembly had decided that in 2014 it would organize a World Conference on Indigenous Peoples to share perspectives and best practices on realization of the rights of indigenous people. Full and inclusive participation of indigenous people in the preparations, negotiations and outcome of the World Conference would be crucial to its success.

22. **Mr. Anaya** (Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples), presenting his report on the rights of indigenous peoples (A/66/288), said that he had worked to advance legal, administrative and programmatic reforms at the national and international levels. In Ecuador, he had offered input on a bill to coordinate the State and indigenous justice systems. In Suriname, he had provided orientation on measures needed to secure the land and resource rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, in light of binding decisions by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

23. In addition to numerous country visits, country reports and responses to allegations of violations of rights, he had issued reports on indigenous people affected by mining projects in Guatemala and hydroelectric projects in Costa Rica and Panama and on a violent conflict in Peru between police and indigenous people. His reports to the Human Rights Council had examined the duty of States to consult with indigenous people; the responsibility of corporations to respect human rights; the need to obtain free, prior and informed consent of indigenous people before moving ahead with initiatives; and confidence-building measures. His report on corporate responsibility had discussed the due diligence corporations must exercise when engaging in or planning activities that would affect indigenous people, including identifying how indigenous peoples might be affected by the proposed activities; respecting indigenous peoples' rights to land and resources; carrying out impact studies; and establishing mitigation measures and benefit-sharing.

24. He had examined situations in which extractive industry activities had infringed on indigenous rights, observing the sometimes catastrophic impact of extractive industries on the rights of indigenous peoples. He had seen negligent projects implemented without proper guarantees or the involvement of the people concerned. He had examined situations related to extractive industries that had erupted into violence.

25. A lack of understanding about key issues related to extractive industries among all actors was a major barrier to the effective protection and realization of indigenous peoples' rights. There were significant legal and policy gaps and a lack of coherence in standards related to extractive activities worldwide. The issue of extractive industries would therefore be a major focus of the remainder of his mandate. He planned to hold expert meetings and consultations with indigenous people, States and business enterprises around the world and launch an online consultation forum on issues related to extractive industries. At the same time, he would continue to consider the broad range of issues affecting indigenous peoples and monitor States' compliance with international human rights obligations.

26. **Mr. Ulibarri** (Costa Rica) said that the Supreme Court of Costa Rica had been discussing how to incorporate into domestic law ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. The Government welcomed the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on appropriate procedures and consultations in connection with the El Diquís hydroelectric project. The Government was aware of the importance of making it

possible for the indigenous peoples to defend their way of life through proper representation. Domestic human rights provisions were also applicable.

27. **Mr. Tagle** (Chile) said that the critical situation of indigenous peoples in his country had been resolved owing to flexibility on the part of the representatives of those peoples, the Government, civil society and the Catholic Church who had acted as mediators. The Ministry of Planning had recently decided to hold consultations with indigenous people to ensure compliance with ILO Convention No. 169 and the Declaration.

28. **Ms. Taracena Secaira** (Guatemala) said that the Special Rapporteur had provided guidelines for avoiding confrontations in areas of Guatemala where extraction activities were taking place. She wondered how to ensure that consultations were not deadlocked. There must be more legal certainty with regard to the consultations. Information on future steps to ensure success would be welcome.

29. **Mr. de Séllos** (Brazil) said that his country's domestic law addressed some of the provisions covered in the Declaration. New ways of having dialogue with and defending the rights of indigenous peoples were needed. A seminar on consultation would be held in Brasilia in December. Corporations must respect the rights of indigenous peoples, especially the right to life.

30. **Mr. Archondo** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) asked the Special Rapporteur to share his views on how the World Conference should be organized, what modalities should be planned for the participation of indigenous people and the possible outcome of the Conference.

31. **Mr. De Léon Huerta** (Mexico) said that, while the Special Rapporteur would strengthen coordination between his mandate, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, each of those entities had a specific mandate. The mandates were complementary.

32. Immigration laws affected some indigenous peoples in their traditional movements, with the border between the United States and Mexico dividing some peoples. More details on how to address that issue were requested. Finally, were current arrangements within the United Nations adequate to ensure the broadest possible participation by indigenous peoples in all international agenda issues affecting them?

33. **Ms. Tschampa** (Observer for the European Union) asked for further information on the roles of the Special Rapporteur and of the Permanent Forum and the Expert Mechanism and wished to know how States and other stakeholders could assist in order to achieve optimum cooperation among them. Information on the most important obstacles to implementation of the Declaration would also be welcome. She wondered what new programmes of technical and financial assistance should be established to implement the Declaration and reform existing programmes and how existing programmes should be reformed. The Special Rapporteur was also invited to share his views on how to find common ground among various actors in the context of extractive projects.

34. **Ms. Arias** (Peru) said that her country had recently promulgated a law on prior consent that was fully in accordance with ILO Convention No. 169. In that connection she wished to hear the Special Rapporteur's views on how to make prior consultation mechanisms more effective.

35. **Ms. Medal** (Nicaragua), noting the Special Rapporteur had referred to her country in his report as an example of good practice with respect to title to ancestral lands and resources, confirmed her Government's commitment to continue restoring rights to indigenous peoples and renewed its invitation to Mr. Anaya to continue working with her country to develop good practices for addressing indigenous peoples' issues.

36. **Mr. Anaya** (Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples), speaking in response to questions and comments by delegates, urged countries which had not yet responded to his requests for invitations, especially some countries in Asia, to consider those requests favourably.

37. With regard to the hydroelectric dam project in Costa Rica, he looked forward to building a consultation procedure as laid out in the recommendations in his report. Both the Government and indigenous peoples had indicated acceptance of the main components of the recommendations.

38. It was necessary to build confidence prior to entering into a discussion with indigenous people on

any particular measures. Indigenous peoples had experienced oppression for centuries that had created distrust. Therefore, at the early stages of any consultation, there must be open discussion free from any kind of pressure. Indigenous people must be allowed to express their concerns freely and openly and must be involved in the design of the initiative from the earliest stage. Much patience was required on the part of all concerned. Indigenous peoples might have long-standing issues related to land and resource rights that had to be resolved before any development project could go forward. Initiatives to develop resources on lands where there was no land tenure security created considerable discontent.

39. Indigenous people needed unfiltered information. They should be regarded as equals, capable of understanding information on their own. They should gain access to relevant expertise where necessary. To promote implementation of the Declaration, the international community should support capacity-building, not only on such topics as requesting funding, accessing grievance procedures and understanding the Declaration, but in technical fields, such as business administration and other subjects which indigenous people confronted regularly. Government actors should also benefit from capacity-building to better understand issues of concern to indigenous peoples. Government officials were often oblivious to the standards that applied or should apply to indigenous issues.

40. In order to participate in meetings at the United Nations, indigenous people had to borrow credentials from a non-governmental organization or form one and obtain accreditation from the Economic and Social Council. That caused symbolic and substantive problems for indigenous peoples. They had their own authority structures, which were not representatives of civil society organizations but rather the authorities of indigenous Governments. Mechanisms must be developed that allowed them to participate as Government authorities.

41. The Declaration affirmed the right of indigenous peoples to participate in all levels of decision-making through their own representative institutions. Those rights should be recognized within the United Nations, and new modalities of participation should emerge from the World Conference in 2014. The Declaration required reflection, resolve and energy on the part of all stakeholders for its provisions to be realized.

42. **Ms. Coye-Felson** (Belize), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that CARICOM member States were working to ensure equal representation of indigenous peoples in governance and decision-making. The contributions of indigenous peoples to national prosperity through sharing of traditional knowledge on biodiversity, crop productivity and conservation were acknowledged. Their social and cultural institutions were encouraged, while their engagement in the larger society was supported as well.

43. However, failure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals owing to the economic crisis would have a disproportionate impact on indigenous peoples, who represented about one third of the world's poorest and most marginalized people. Indigenous women and girls suffered from multiple forms of discrimination and were most frequently subjected to extreme poverty, illiteracy, lack of access to land, non-existent or poor health care and violence.

44. Society at large was continuously educated on the historic importance of the region's indigenous populations and also on their contributions. Policies were implemented to support self-government of and by indigenous peoples. The Declaration created no new special rights separate from the universal fundamental human rights, but it elaborated upon them in the specific cultural, historical, social and economic circumstances of indigenous peoples.

45. **Ms. Tschampa** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Croatia, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; as well as Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, said that the European Union particularly welcomed the decision of the Permanent Forum to emphasize violence against women and girls at its next meeting. It noted with appreciation the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur in his report regarding consensual decision-making in the context of the duty to consult and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights recently adopted by the Human Rights Council, which highlighted specific challenges in relation to indigenous peoples.

46. The European Union recognized the valuable contribution by indigenous peoples to sustainable

development and biological diversity. Indigenous issues were mainstreamed in EU development programmes and policies. The European Union had financed 32 projects worldwide in 2007-2009, amounting to nearly 8 million dollars, to ensure inclusion of indigenous peoples in decision-making. It provided substantial support to develop the potential of the Arctic region in the European Union and neighbouring areas, including through international cooperation in business, education, natural resources and cultural heritage.

47. **Ms. Calcinari Van Der Velde** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that colonization of the Americas by Europeans had resulted in the greatest holocaust and human rights violations in the history of humanity, including the killing of 80 million indigenous people. Since the revolution in Venezuela, 12 years earlier, the rights of indigenous communities, including recognition and protection of their culture and identity, had been a priority. An entire section of the Constitution was dedicated to indigenous issues, and there were 46 national laws on the subject.

48. Education was multilingual, with textbooks translated into indigenous languages. There was an indigenous university. Health and development policy were implemented in consultation with indigenous communities and included training for indigenous medical specialists.

49. Collective land ownership was recognized in her country, and demarcation was carried out with the participation of indigenous people. Natural resource use by the State in indigenous habitats was implemented without prejudice to the cultural, social and economic integrity of indigenous peoples and was subject to prior consultation. Local, State and national elected bodies had significant indigenous representation.

50. **Ms. Medal** (Nicaragua) said that her country's legislation enshrined the autonomous status of indigenous peoples and people of African descent, as well as collective land ownership for indigenous communities. Measures had been taken to reverse the historical exclusion experienced by minorities and to promote their human rights.

51. Despite the economic crisis and poverty inherited from the previous neoliberal leadership, much was being done to improve living standards for indigenous people. Nicaragua had adopted ILO Convention No. 169 in 2010, and, in the context of Central American integration, the Government of Nicaragua had proposed a regional plan of action for the participation of indigenous communities and communities of African descent in the integration process. Meetings had been held between Government representatives and indigenous leaders from the Pacific coast and northern and central Nicaragua to establish a programme of work for indigenous people in those regions and raise awareness of the Declaration and ILO Convention No. 169. The national school curriculum was taught in indigenous languages and school primers were available in those languages.

52. **Ms. Nemroff** (United States of America) said that her Government had numerous initiatives to respond to the concerns of indigenous leaders and was strengthening the Government-to-Government relationship, protecting the environment, providing redress, addressing health-care gaps, promoting sustainable economic development and protecting cultures.

53. Tribes in the United States participated in and benefited from natural resources development as beneficial owners of resources and as regulators. Tribes were beneficial owners of timber, energy and mineral resources in Indian country.

54. Under federal law, tribes were more than just a constituency. They were part of a larger process that addressed historical and cultural concerns, providing protection that was independent of the Government-to-Government relationship that the United States had with tribes.

55. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana) said that indigenous people represented 9 per cent of the population in his country and were the fastest-growing segment of the population. Two Government ministers were indigenous, as were 10 out of 65 members of the National Assembly. Indigenous peoples held permanent title to 14 per cent of Guyana's territory.

56. The Amerindian Act of 2006, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs and an Indigenous Peoples Commission were among the mechanisms established to address indigenous issues. A key objective was the continuous training of indigenous people to take up teaching and other positions in their communities. The provision of school uniforms and free meals had boosted school attendance in communities where large numbers of indigenous people lived.

57. National poverty eradication efforts included a focus on improving the conditions of indigenous peoples. Microcredit schemes and grants facilitated economic investment in remote communities. Programmes to reduce carbon emissions and fight climate change contained economic development components which would benefit indigenous peoples.

58. **Ms. Morgan** (Mexico) welcomed the mandate extension of the Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues to allow participation of indigenous representatives in the work of the Human Rights Council. Mexico provided resources for the Fund and encouraged other States to do the same.

59. There must be effective participation of indigenous representatives during conferences. The forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on actions to broaden indigenous participation would be received with interest. The modalities for indigenous participation in the World Conference set for 2014 should be determined as soon as possible. Participation should take place through indigenous peoples' representative institutions. Decision-making was not only a fundamental right, but also the cornerstone for effective enjoyment of all other rights.

60. The Permanent Representative of Mexico had invited indigenous experts and organizations in the Permanent Forum to participate in the Second International Technical Workshop of Indigenous Peoples and States on negotiations for the Framework of the United Nations on Climate Change Conference in Oaxaca, Mexico. Participants had included indigenous people from many regions, representatives of various Governments, the President of the Group of 77 and China and the Presidents of the sixteenth and seventeenth Conferences of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-16 and COP-17). Indigenous proposals would be published shortly.

61. **Ms. Horsington** (Australia) said that her Government's national apology to indigenous people in 2008 and its support for the Declaration, announced in 2009, had improved the relationship between the Government and the indigenous peoples of Australia. Under a Government strategy to close the gap of indigenous disadvantage in health, housing, education and employment, over 1,100 houses had been built or refurbished, over 3,500 young indigenous Australians had received support to complete their final year of secondary school, over 16,000 indigenous Australians had commenced employment and over 12,000 had begun vocational training.

62. The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples had held its first forum in 2011. The Congress provided an independent national vehicle for indigenous people to participate in decision-making. It consisted of 120 delegates from across the country. A new national policy on multiculturalism embraced the principles of valuing diversity, maintaining social cohesion, communicating the benefits of Australia's diversity and responding to intolerance. Australia had actively supported Bolivia in organizing the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

63. The distinguished Australian aboriginal human rights scholar Professor Megan Davis had begun her three-year term as a member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2011. She was a leading scholar of indigenous legal rights and international law who had been active in the United Nations as an advocate for indigenous rights, particularly in relation to indigenous women.

64. For the first time, the youth delegate of Australia to the United Nations was an indigenous Australian. Australia would soon appoint an indigenous person as its Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Australia had recently contributed 100,000 dollars to the Trust Fund on Indigenous Populations to support the participation of indigenous representatives in international meetings. Australia was also contributing to a World Intellectual Property Organization fund to support indigenous participation in negotiations on a new international instrument to protect genetic resources.

65. **Ms. Zolotova** (Russian Federation) said that her country was home to over 160 different ethnic groups. The special status of small indigenous ethnicities was enshrined in Russian legislation. Their rights and cultural presentation were Government priorities. Conditions for the fair and universal development, choice and use of various native languages were provided for, as were the rights of ethnic groups to preserve their cultures and protect their historic homelands.

66. An annual competition was held for grants from the federal budget for media projects designed to preserve and develop the cultural heritage of small indigenous peoples. At the most recent session of the

Permanent Forum, the Russian Federation had provided support for a workshop on best practices drawn from cooperation between indigenous communities in the Russian Federation and industrial firms. Indigenous non-governmental organizations had participated in the workshop. The Russian Federation had hosted a conference in St. Petersburg in 2010 on intellectual property protection of traditional indigenous knowledge. Indigenous people and experts from over 30 countries had participated.

67. **Mr. Heshiki** (Japan) said that in 2008, the Diet of Japan had unanimously adopted a resolution calling for recognition of the Ainu as indigenous people and adoption of comprehensive policies for them. The Government had recognized that the Ainu people had their own language, religion and culture and that they were indigenous inhabitants of the northern part of Japan, particularly Hokkaido.

68. The Government of Japan had set up an advisory panel that included high-level experts and a representative of the Ainu people. The panel had proposed measures in the areas of education, revitalization of Ainu culture and industrial development. The Government had also established a policy council in which several Ainu representatives, including women, took active part. The council was working on a project to build a national centre to promote respect for the culture of the Ainu people and was collecting data on living conditions of the Ainu people outside of Hokkaido.

69. **Ms. Valle Camino** (Cuba) said that the oppression of indigenous people in Cuba by colonizers had been so severe that no indigenous people remained.

70. One of the main rights which must be defended was the right of indigenous peoples to freely choose their political status and have access to economic, social and cultural development. Cuba reaffirmed the right of the indigenous peoples of the Andes to the full enjoyment of their ancient, traditional rights, including the right to chew the coca leaf. Cuba recognized the right of the Government of Bolivia to protect that practice for its people.

71. It was unacceptable to try to incorporate the human rights of indigenous peoples under the Declaration into development parameters which were rejected by the majority of those peoples as alien to their way of life and their needs. Genuine implementation of those rights in accordance with the real needs of those peoples and their interests was called for.

72. **Mr. Grunditz** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that some indigenous people were subject to human rights violations, including violence, in some cases, as a result of defending their rights. Indigenous women suffered from multiple discrimination, within their own communities as well as within the larger society.

73. Some confusion remained about the roles and functions of the three United Nations entities established to address indigenous issues, as well as about indigenous peoples' place within the institutional structure of the United Nations, as they were not always organized as non-governmental organizations. The report of the Secretary-General on promoting participation at the United Nations of recognized indigenous peoples' representatives and on the organization of such participation would be received with interest. The Nordic countries welcomed the establishment in 2011 of the United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Partnership, an inter-agency initiative which would contribute to mainstreaming indigenous rights within the United Nations system and delivering tangible progress at the country level.

74. The Special Rapporteur had recently visited the Sápmi region. He had noted that Finland, Norway and Sweden attached great importance to indigenous issues. The third negotiation on the Nordic Saami Convention would soon take place.

75. All the Nordic countries were members of the Arctic Council, a high-level consensus forum for cooperation and interaction between States and Arctic peoples, where indigenous peoples participated on an equal footing with Governments.

76 **Mr. Chuquihuara** (Peru) said that for 11 years Peru had consistently led the process to develop the Declaration, which testified to its strong commitment to the rights of indigenous peoples. Recently, a law on prior consultation with indigenous and tribal peoples had entered into force, following unanimous approval by the Congress of Peru. It was fully in accordance with ILO Convention No. 169. The Special Rapporteur had played an important role in the development of that law.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.